

March 2017

# Capital Funds Increased for East River Bridge Repair and Citywide Street Repaving

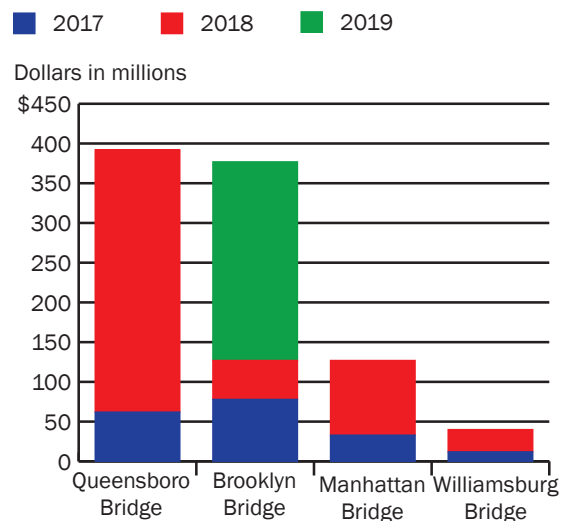
The January 2017 Capital Commitment Plan, which covers the years 2017 through 2020, includes additional funding to improve the condition of the city’s bridges and streets. (All years refer to fiscal years unless otherwise noted.) The Mayor added \$191 million to his latest capital plan for repairs of the East River bridges and \$150 million to repave and resurface streets across all five boroughs.

**East River Bridges Receive Additional Funding.** The Department of Transportation (DOT) is responsible for the upkeep of 789 bridges within the city, ranging from small pedestrian crossings, to highway overpasses, to the bridges that span the East River. DOT’s commitment plan for 2017 through 2020 includes an additional \$191 million for the rehabilitation of the East River bridges, which include the Ed Koch Queensboro, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Williamsburg bridges. The additional funding increases the total budget for East River bridge rehabilitation by nearly 26 percent to \$936 million in 2017 through 2019 (no funds are planned for the East River bridge capital projects in 2020). If these funds are all committed during the next three years, this will represent a substantial increase in capital spending on the East River bridges.

Since 2011, DOT has committed an average of \$65 million a year on East River bridge capital projects. With current planned commitments averaging \$312 million per year, these funds represent the largest capital investment in the East River bridges since 2010, when the city committed \$682 million for repairs mainly to the Brooklyn and Manhattan bridges. About half of the funds committed in 2010 were from sources other than city funds, mainly federal grants; in contrast, less than 1 percent (only \$2.7 million) of the funds planned for 2017 through 2019 are from noncity sources.

The majority of the funds added to the capital budget for East River bridge repair work were allocated for projects at the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge, the East River’s busiest crossing. The additional \$110 million in the capital plan brings total planned commitments for the Queensboro Bridge to \$392 million, an increase of 39 percent, with all funds budgeted for 2017 and 2018. Nearly half of the additional funding will augment the budget for the replacement of the upper level of the bridge, which is now expected to cost \$353 million. The remaining funds added for the Queensboro Bridge were allocated for hazard mitigation purposes to provide additional protection against natural disasters or other threats. Hazard mitigation work, which varies in accordance with the specific needs identified

**Transportation Capital Funds Planned for East River Bridge Repair: By Fiscal Year**



SOURCE: January 2017 Capital Commitment Plan  
NOTE: Amounts exclude contingency funds but include funds from Interfund Agreements.

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for each bridge, can include structural hardening, fire suppression systems, and installation of security cameras.

Funding for Brooklyn Bridge capital repairs grew by \$34 million, or nearly 12 percent, in the January commitment plan. The additional funds increased planned capital commitments to \$377 million in 2017 through 2019. These funds are targeted for the rehabilitation of ramps and approaches to the bridge, as well as the on-going painting of the bridge to protect the steel against corrosion.

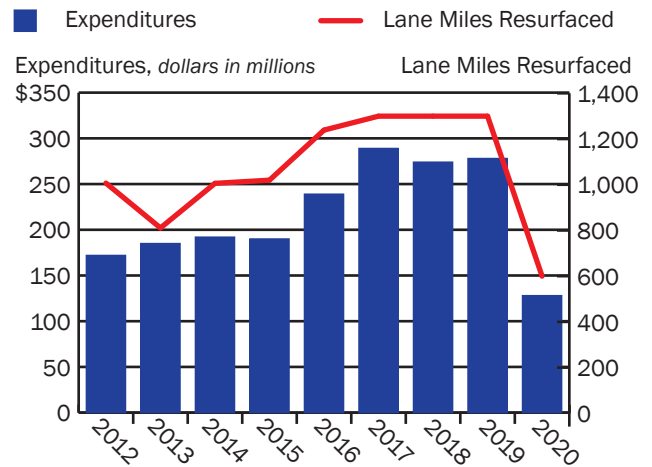
The capital plan included an additional \$33 million, a 35 percent increase, in commitments for projects on the Manhattan Bridge in 2017 and 2018. This increase brings total planned commitments for capital work on the Manhattan Bridge to \$127 million. The majority of funds added were for hazard mitigation projects, while \$2 million was added to cover other scheduled rehabilitation work.

Capital expenditures on the Williamsburg Bridge increased by \$13 million in the latest plan, a 48 percent increase for 2017 through 2020, which brings the current capital commitment plan to \$40 million. The additional funding was provided primarily for hazard mitigation work. Beyond the current capital plan period, \$280 million is allocated in 2021 for miscellaneous repair work as well as routine painting of the bridge. Although these funds are not new to this plan, they represent part of the long-term maintenance and rehabilitation of the bridge.

Capital investments are necessary in order to maintain the bridges in state of good repair. The most recent rating categorizes the condition of the four East River Bridges as fair. (The New York State Department of Transportation rates bridges on a scale of 1-7 where ratings of 1-3 are classified as “poor,” 3-5 as “fair,” 5-6 as “good,” and 6-7 as “very good.”) The Williamsburg Bridge has the best rating among the four East River bridges (4.5), followed by Queensboro and Manhattan bridges (for which IBO has calculated weighted average ratings of 4.2 and 4.1, respectively, based on the scores of their upper and lower levels). The Brooklyn Bridge has the lowest rating of the four (3.1).

**More Funds for Repaving & Resurfacing Streets.** Another transportation department responsibility is maintaining and repairing 6,300 miles of street, which represents 19,410 lane miles. (Lane miles are the length of a street multiplied by the number of lanes in that street.) Over the last five years the agency has repaved an average of approximately 1,000 lane miles per year, or about 5 percent of the citywide lanes per year. In 2016, DOT increased its effort,

### Street Repaving and Resurfacing: Expenditures and Lane Miles



SOURCE: January 2017 Capital Commitment Plan; Financial Management System; Mayor's Management Reports, 2012-2016; and Department of Transportation

NOTES: Amounts exclude contingency and Hurricane Sandy-related funds but include Interfund Agreement funds. Figures for 2012-2016 refer to actual commitments, 2017-2020 refer to planned commitments.

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repaving 1,239 lane miles, or over 6 percent of the citywide lane-mileage. DOT's commitment plan for 2017 through 2020 includes an additional \$150 million for street repaving and resurfacing. The additional capital funds were added to 2019 in order to increase the plan for repaved lane miles to 1,300, bringing the 2019 repaving goal in line with the plans for 2017 and 2018. For now, the January commitment plan assumes a sharp decline in funds for 2020 repaving, with both funding and planned lane mile repaving falling by more than half. It remains to be seen if the city will maintain the recent higher goal of repaving 1,300 lane miles annually after 2019 by adding money to later commitment plans. The current four-year budget for repaving and resurfacing totals \$969 million from 2017 through 2020.

By the end of 2019, DOT anticipates it will have repaved 6,600 lane miles since the start of the de Blasio Administration. Of the 3,625 lane miles the city repaved in the last three years, Brooklyn and Queens each accounted for about 30 percent, 13 percent were in Staten Island, and 12 percent each in Manhattan and the Bronx. The remaining 3 percent of repaving was done on arterial highways. In contrast, only 23 percent of the repaving funds planned for 2017 through 2020 are allocated for projects in a specific borough, including 11 percent in Manhattan, 4 percent in Queens, 3 percent in Brooklyn, and 2 percent each in Staten Island and the Bronx. The remaining 76 percent of funds have not yet been allocated to a specific borough.

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The increased effort for repaving is tied to the current condition of city streets. Over the past decade the share of city streets rated as good has hovered around 70 percent, after falling from an average of 84 percent in the late 1990s and early 2000s. (DOT rates every street segment on a scale of 1-10 and ratings are categorized into “poor” (1-3), “fair” (4-7), and “good” (8-10), with the exception of local streets for which a rating of 7 is deemed “good.” In May 2015, the city added funds to repave 1,200 lane miles in 2016 and 1,300 lane miles in 2017, in an effort to

increase the share of streets rated as good to 80 percent by 2017. However, from 2015 through 2016 the percentage of streets rated as good edged down from 70 percent to 69 percent. Since then, DOT has revised its target for 2017 to 71 percent of city streets rated as good, only marginally improving the current state of streets and preventing further erosion of street quality.

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